

M/H NIE 15-79

Prospects for Post-Tito Yugoslavia

1 February 1980





**Director of  
Central  
Intelligence**

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: APR 2006

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# **Prospects for Post-Tito Yugoslavia**

**National Intelligence Estimate  
Memorandum to Holders**

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MEMORANDUM TO HOLDERS  
OF NIE 15-79

PROSPECTS FOR  
POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA

Information available as of 28 January 1980 was  
used in the preparation of this memorandum.

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THIS MEMORANDUM IS ISSUED BY THE DIRECTOR OF  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE.

THE NATIONAL FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE BOARD CONCURS,  
EXCEPT AS NOTED IN THE TEXT.

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of the  
Memorandum:*

The Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, the Defense Intelligence Agency,  
and the National Security Agency.

*Also Participating:*

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

The Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps

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1. In light of Tito's illness and other events since September 1979, particularly the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Intelligence Community representatives have reexamined the major conclusions of NIE 15-79, *Prospects for Post-Tito Yugoslavia* (25 September 1979). In their view, the principal judgments of that Estimate thus far remain valid.

2. With respect to possible Soviet military or political actions directed against Yugoslavia, NIE 15-79 concluded that Soviet behavior would depend in large measure on the course of internal Yugoslav developments. If, as we expect, the transition to collective leadership occurs smoothly, if that leadership retains its cohesion, and if that cohesion is reflected in broad public support for the new leadership, Soviet opportunities for aggressive military or political actions against Yugoslavia in the short term will be diminished.

3. Indeed, the Yugoslavs' heightened perceptions—resulting from the invasion of Afghanistan—of possible moves against their own country should increase the cohesion of their leadership and the Yugoslav public, and could serve as an additional deterrent to the Soviet Union. Furthermore, in view of the USSR's apparent effort to maintain its detente relationship with Western Europe despite the invasion, Moscow would have a continued incentive to maintain a restrained posture toward Yugoslavia.

4. As NIE 15-79 noted, however, the longer term prognosis for continued political cohesion is more problematic in the event of regional tensions in Yugoslavia or serious disputes within the leadership. Opportunities for the Soviets to apply political or military pressures could arise. How the invasion of Afghanistan may influence Soviet calculations on Yugoslavia under such circumstances will depend largely on its longer

term effects on the internal political atmosphere in Europe and on the evolution of East-West relations.

5. One view in the Intelligence Community holds that, for the midterm (one to five years), in the light of the invasion of Afghanistan, the probability of Soviet military intervention against a post-Tito Yugoslavia unacceptable to Moscow is now higher than previously estimated. According to this view, the Afghan experience may already have persuaded the Soviets that expected Yugoslav military resistance would not itself be a deterrent and that the risk of US or other Western counteraction would be lower than they previously believed.<sup>1</sup>

6. Most analysts, however, believe that, while the Soviets did consciously cross a threshold in invading a non-Warsaw Pact Marxist-led state, the Afghan analogy has only limited applicability to Yugoslavia. They believe that the Soviet perception of expected Yugoslav military resistance and the danger of heightened tension and escalation associated with it has not been substantially altered.<sup>2</sup> The Director of Central Intelligence supports this latter view.

7. If Tito does not recover and a succession occurs, we anticipate reconvening Intelligence Community representatives to issue an updated assessment in the light of early evidence bearing on the prospects for the successor regime, and on any indications of change in estimated Soviet intentions.

<sup>1</sup> The holder of this view is the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army.

<sup>2</sup> The holders of this view are Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, CIA; the Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director, National Security Agency; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force; and the Director of Intelligence, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

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